Toward the Light

Hassan Al-Banna

In Rajab 1366 (May June 1947), the Imaam Al-Shaheed Hasan Al-Banna, General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, sent this letter to Faruq 1st, King of Egypt and the Sudan, Mustafa Al-Nahaas Pasha, his then Prime Minister, and to the kings, princes, and rulers of the various countries of the Islamic world, as well as to a great number of civic and religious leaders in those countries. Once again we are publishing and distributing it. Many of the view points and directives it contains still represent the dearest hope of every Arab and every Muslim. Let us pray Allah that it be fulfilled!

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Praise be to Allah, and may Allah bless and save Our Leader Muhammad, his Household and his Companions. 'Our Lord, Bestow on us mercy from yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way.' (Surah-al-Kahf (18), ayah 10)

Cairo, Egypt, Rajab 1366

Your Excellency,

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

What has urged me to submit this letter to Your Excellency is a keen desire to guide the nation, whose leadership Allah has placed in your care and whose affairs He has delegated to you in this new age. Such that it is done in a righteous way, established on the most excellent of paths, drawing out for it the best of programs, protecting it from shocks and disturbances, and sparing it from long and painful experiences.

We do not desire from this anything , except to have fulfilled our duty and submitted our advice... for Allah's reward is better and more lasting.

1. THE SHEPHERD'S RESPONSIBILITY

Your Excellency,

Allah had delegated the rulership of this nation to you, and has placed on you its interests, its affairs, its present and its future. as a trust. You are responsible for this before Allah (SWT). If the present generation are your tools, the coming generation will be your products. How mighty this trust, and how great this responsibility, that a man should be held answerable for a nation:

'Each of you is a shepherds and each is responsible for his flock.'

In ancient times, the Just Imaam (Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab) said: 'If a mule were to stumble in Iraq, would hold myself responsible for it before Allah (SWT), as to why I had not leveled the road for her.' The Imam Umar depicted the immensity of his responsibility in a saying of his:

'How I wish that I could vacate my position, owing nothing and not being owed anything!'

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. A Period of Transition

The most dangerous period in the life of a nation, and the most deserving of critical study, is the period of transition from one situation to another. It is then that plans for the new period are laid and its guiding principles and policies are drawn up, according to which, the nation will be formed and to which it will adhere. If these plans, principles, and policies are clear cut, sound, and solid, then announce for this nation of a long and extended life, of prosperous and flourishing work. Inform them of success and give them glad tidings of a great reward, eternal fame, the just verdict of history, and a good reputation.

2.2. At the Cross-roads

This important task poses two conditions:

The first is to liberate the nation from its political bonds so that it may obtain its freedom and regain its lost independence and sovereignty.

The second is its reconstruction, so that it may follow its own path among other nations and compete with them in its progress toward social perfection.

For the time being, the political struggle has come to a halt, and you, along with the nation, are facing a new period. You will now see two ways before you, each one urging you to turn the nation in its direction and to follow its path . Each has its particular characteristics, its distinguishing features, its effects, its results, its advocates and its promoters. The first is the way of Islam and its principles, its rules, its culture and its civilization; the second is the way of the West and the outward aspects of its life, its organization and its methods. It is our belief that the first way, the way of Islam, its principles and rules, is the only way which ought to be followed, and towards which the present and future nation should direct itself.

2.3. Advantages of the Islamic Direction

If we take the nation along this path, we shall be able to obtain many benefits, among them is the Islamic methodology which has already been experienced and history has testified as to its soundness. It has produced for the benefit of mankind a nation, most powerful and virtuous, most merciful, and righteous, blessed above all other nations. It possesses a sanctity and stability in the minds of men which makes it easy for all to adopt and understand, to respond to, as well as to adhere to, once they are properly oriented to it. Add to that national self esteem and sincere patriotism. For then we will construct our lives on our own rules and principles, taking nothing from others. Herein lie the highest ideals of a social and active independence, after political independence.

To take this course, will firstly mean a strengthening of Arab unity, and secondly, a strengthening of Islamic unity. The entire Islamic world will support with its heart and soul. They will see us as Brothers, and we will stand behind and support each other. And herein lies a great moral advantage which no intelligent person will shun.

This course is complete and comprehensive, and guarantees a nation the best system of organization for public life, both practical and spiritual. This is the advantage that distinguishes Islam, for it bases the organization of the life of a nation on two important pillars: the adherence to good, and the avoidance of that which is harmful.

If we pursue this path, we shall be able to avoid the Vital problems which other nations (who neither knew of this course nor followed it) have fallen into. Indeed, we shall be able to solve many complicated problems which the present institutions have failed to solve and here we cite the words of Bernard Shaw:

'How much the world in the modern age needs a man like Muhammad to solve its stubborn, complicated problems over a cup of coffee.'

After all this, if we follow this path, Allah's support will be behind us, strengthening us in our moments of weakness, sustaining us in hardship, easing our struggle for us, and urging us to go forward:

'Do not falter in pursuing the people; if you suffer, they suffer as do you, and you hope from Allah that which they do not and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 104)

2.4. Western Civilization Today

In concluding this discussion, we assert that the Western civilization, which was for a long time, brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection subjugating the whole world with the products of this science, is now in ruin, Its foundations are crumbling, and its institution and guiding principles are being torn down. Its political foundations are being destroyed by dictatorships, while its economy is in crisis. The millions of wretched, unemployed and hungry people will bear witness to this. Strange ideologies and widespread revolutions are undermining its social foundations. Its people are at a loss as to the cure and have strayed far of the path . Their conferences are all failures, their treaties have not lasted and their covenants are torn to pieces: The League of Nations is an empty shell, possessing neither spirit nor influence. On one hand they are signing un-Islamic treaties and taking comfort therein, while on the other hand they are receiving violent blows, so that the world, thanks to these tyrannical and self seeking policies, has become like a ship in the midst of the sea, with its captain distraught while blustering gales assault it on all sides. All of humanity is tormented, wretched, worried and confused, having been scorched by the fires of greed and materialism. They are in dire need of the sweetness of True Islam to wash from them the filth of misery and to lead them to happiness.

The leadership of the world was at one time entirely in the hands of the East, then it fell to the West after the rise of the Greeks and Romans. After that, the Prophetic eras of Moses, Christ , and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all) brought it back to the East for a second time, but then the East fell into its long sleep, and the West enjoyed a new rebirth. It was Allah's Sunnah which does not fail to manifest itself and the West inherited leadership of the world. But lo and behold! It was tyrannical and unjust, insolent, misguided, and stumbling blindly, all it requires is a strong Eastern power to exert itself under the shadow of Allah's banner, with the standard of the Qur'an fluttering at its head, and backed up by the strong soldiers of unyielding faith; then you will see the World living under the tranquillity of Islam, and on the lips of everyone will be the following slogan:

'Praise be unto Allah who guided us to this. for truly we would not have been guided if Allah had not guided us.' (Surah-al-A'raaf (7), ayah 43)

This is not in the least a product of the imagination: It is no other than the true verdict of history. And if it is not fulfilled by us:

'Then Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward believers and powerful against unbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the reproach of any reproacher. That is the bounty of Allah, which He brings to whom He will.' (Surah-al-Maa'idah (5), ayah 54)

3. ISLAM IS GUARANTEED TO SUPPLY THE FORTHCOMING NATION WITH ALL THAT IT NEEDS

There is no regime in this world which can supply the forthcoming nation with what it requires in the way of

institutions, principles, objectives, and judgements to the same extent as Islam can. The Noble Qur'an is full of passages describing this particular aspect, giving both general and detailed examples. It provides a clear and precise remedy. No nation adheres to it without succeeding in its aspirations.

3.1. Islam and Hope

An upcoming nation needs a broad, and far reaching vision. The Qur'an has cultivated in its nations this sentiment in a manner which makes a dead nation come to life, full of ambition, hope, and determination. It is enough that it labels despair the road to unbelief, and hopelessness a manifestation of error. If the weakest nation heard the words of the Almighty:

'And We wished to do a favor to those who were weak in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them inheritors.' (Surah-al-Qasas (28), ayahs 5-6)

And in the words of the Almighty:

'Falter not, nor grieve, for you will be paramount if you are believers. If a wound touches you, a wound like it has already touched the people. These are the days which We apportion to mankind in turn.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayahs 139-40)

And in the words of the Almighty:

'He it is who expelled those of the People of the Book who disbelieved from their abodes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would go forth, and you thought that their fortresses would render them impregnable to Allah. But Allah came to them from whence they had not reckoned, and He cast terror into their hearts, while they made ruins of their homes by their own hands and the hands of the believers. Consider then, you who have eyes!' (Surah-al-Hashr (59), ayah 2)

And in the words of the Almighty:

'Or did you think to enter Paradise when what had come to those who passed on before you had not yet come to you? Misery and suffering touched them and they were so shaken that the Apostle and those who believed said 'When is Allah's succor?' Is not Allah's succor near?' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 214)

If the weakest of nations heard these glad tidings and read these realistic and applicable stories, they would without doubt emerge as the strongest of nations in faith and spirit. They would see in this hope, that which would compel them to plunge into difficulties, however severe they might be, and to confront events, however overwhelming, until they attain the perfection to which they aspired.

3.2. Islam and National Greatness

The upcoming nations need to find pride in their nationalism just as a superior nation does with its own merits and history, so that their image be imprinted on the minds of their sons, and they offer their blood and lives on behalf of this glory and nobility. So that they work for the welfare of the Homeland, for its pride and prosperity. We will not see in any other regime, an ideal, more just, more virtuous, and more merciful as in True Islam. For the nation that knows that its nobility and honor have been sanctified by Allah in His foresight, and that He has registered it in His Masterful Book, for as He, the Blessed and Almighty, says:

'You are the best nation which has been brought forth for mankind.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayah 110)

and in the words of the Almighty:

'Thus have We made you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger a witness over you.' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 143)

'Greatness belongs to Allah, and to His Apostle, and to the believers.' (Surah-al-Munaafiqun (63), ayah 8)

is the most worthy nation to sacrifice the world and all that it contains for its God given honor.

The modern nations have labored to foster this image firmly in the minds of their youth, men and boys alike. thus we hear: "Germany above all!" and "Italy above all!" and "Rule, Britannia!" But the difference between the feelings which the Islamic ideology fosters, and the feelings fostered by these slogans and ideologies, is that a Muslim seeks to rise and connect with Allah, while the a non-Muslim does not go beyond the literal meaning of these words. Furthermore, in creating such sentiments, Islam has defined its goal, and made it a stringent duty to keep to it, clarifying that it is not a matter of extreme chauvinism or false pride, but of leading the world to the common good. Concerning this, He, (SWT), says:

'You command the good and forbid the evil, and believe in Allah.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayah 110)

In other words, it aims for high values, combating evil and a reverence for the ideal while performing any act. It is with these very sentiments that the early Muslims, reached the highest level of justice and mercy ever reported of any nation. On the other hand, the ideology of domination in the minds of the Western nations could not define its goal without being deceivingly fanatical and therefore the result was a bloody war against the weak nations. In this respect, the Islamic ideology adopted the best course, and sought to instill this into its people, turning them away from anything characterized by wickedness and oppression. Islam has extended the frontiers of the Islamic Homeland, and has ordained toil for its welfare and self sacrifice for the sake of its freedom and greatness. According to the Islamic understanding, the Homeland comprises of

(1) the country itself.

(2) the other Islamic countries, for all of them are seen as a home nation and an abode for the Muslim.

(3) This extends to the first Islamic Empire which the Pious Ancestors built with their dear and precious blood,

and over which they raised the banner of Allah. The impression that they left still calls out to their past glory and excellence. The Muslim will be asked before Allah (SWT) why he did not work to restore its lands.

(4) Then the Homeland of the Muslim expands to encompass the entire world. Do you not hear the words of Allah (SWT):

'And fight them until there is no more oppression, and the religion all of it is Allah's' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 193)

Thus did Islam reconcile the sentiments of local nationalism with that of a common nationalism, in all that is good for mankind:

'O mankind, We created you male and female, and We created you peoples and tribes, that you might know one another.' (Surah-al-Hujuraat (49), ayah 13)

3.3. Islam and the Armed Forces

Similarly, upcoming nations require strength, and need to implant the military spirit into their people, especially in these times when peace can only be guaranteed by preparing for war, and the slogan of its people is:

'Strength is the surest way to guarantee the enforcement of justice.'

Islam never overlooked this factor, but in reality made it a stringent duty, and in no way differentiated between it and prayer or fasting. There is no regime In the entire world, which has concerned itself with this factor, (neither in old nor in modern times) to the extent that Islam has in the Qur'an, and in the Traditions and life of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). This is presented in clear and exemplary fashion in the words of the Almighty:

'And prepare against them such force and troops of horses as you can, by which to frighten the enemies of Allah and your enemies.' (Surah-al-Anfaal (8), ayah 60)

And in the words of the Almighty:

'Fighting is prescribed for you, though it be detestable to you. But it may be that you detest something which is good for you, and it may be that you love something which is bad for you.' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayah 216)

And have you ever seen a military proclamation in any other sacred book whether recited in prayer, through dhikr(remembrance), public worship and private communion with Allah, like the proclamation which begins with an abrupt command in the words of the Almighty:

'So let those fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the next!' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 74)

Then He immediately specifies the reward:

'And he who fights in Allah's way and is slain or overcome, We shall provide him with a mighty wage.' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 74)

This is then followed by an exhortation which arouses the noblest sentiments of a man's heart, namely, the deliverance of the people and the Homeland, as He says:

'What is wrong with you that you fight not in the way of Allah and for those weak, ill treated and oppressed among men, women, and children who say: "Our Lord, bring us forth from this city whose people arc unjust, and appoint for us from Thyself a guardian, and appoint for us from Thyself a Protector!"' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 75)

Then He shows them the nobility of their goal and the baselessness of their enemies' goal, demonstrating clearly that they (the Muslims) are sacrificing something of great value: their lives, for a much more precious commodity: the Pleasure of Allah. While at the same time, the non Muslims are fighting with no goal before them. Therefore they are weaker in spirit and more confused in their hearts. He, the Almighty, says:

'Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of idolatry, so fight the auxiliaries of Satan! Truly the wiles of Satan are weak.' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 76)

Then He reproaches those who shirked their duty, taking the easy way out and abandoning the difficult demands of heroism. He shows them their mistake in adopting this attitude, and that boldness would not harm them in the very least, they would only reap the great reward, while there is no profit in abstention. As death can come at any time. Directly following the preceding verses, He says:

'Hast thou no observed those to whom it was said: "Restrain your hands, perform the prayer, and pay the alms?" But when fighting is prescribed for them, lo and behold, a party of them fear men as much as their fear of Allah, or even more. And they say: "Our Lord, why hast Thou prescribed fighting for us? If Thou wouldst but respite us for a brief time!" Say: "The pleasure of this world is but little: the next world is better for the pious, and you will not be wronged to the extent of a single date fiber. Wherever you are, death will overtake you, even if you are in well built towers"' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayahs 77-78)

By Allah, is there a military declaration which has so much force and clarity, awakening within the heart of a soldier all the zeal, pride, and faith the commander desires ?

If the mainstay of military life is discipline and obedience, Allah has gathered them in two verses of His Book, when He (SWT), says:

'Truly God loves those who fight in His way, in ranks, as if they were a solidly constructed building.' (Surah-as-Saff (61), ayah 4)

And as He, the Almighty, says:

'And more fitting for them are obedience and civil speech.' (Surah-Muhammad (47), ayahs 20-21)

And if you read what Islam prescribes concerning the preparation of equipment, the provisioning of the armed forces, the teaching of archery, the sheltering of horses,

the virtue of the shahadah, the reward of jihad, those who spend on its behalf, and those who look after the family of a mujahid and a full understanding of the different types of Jihad, you will see that the list is endless, whether in noble Qur'anic verses, the Honored Traditions, the Pure Prophetic Biography, or the True Islamic jurisprudence:

'Our Lord encompasses all things in knowledge!' (Surah-al-A'raaf (7), ayah 89)

The modern nations have paid close attention to this and have been founded on these principles: we see that Mussolini's Fascism, Hitler's Nazism, and Stalin's Communism are based on pure militarism. But there is a vast difference between all of these and the militarism of Islam, for the Islam which has sanctified the use of force has also preferred peace. Directly after the verses extolling force, the Blessed and Almighty says:

'And if they incline to peace, then incline thou to it, and trust in Allah.' (Surah-al-Anfaal (8), ayah 61)

And it is He who defined the price of victory and its manifestations when He said:

'Allah will surely aid one who aids Him. Allah is Mighty, Glorious! Those, who if We make them powerful in the earth, perform the prayer and pay the alms, and command the good and forbid the evil. For unto Allah belongs the consequence of affairs.' (Surah-al-Hajj (22), ayah 40-41)

And it is He who set down the basis of international military law, when He (SWT) said:

'And if You (O Muhammad) fear treachery from any people, throw back (their covenant) on them (so as to be on) equal terms. Truly Allah does not love the treacherous.' (Surah-al-Anfaal (8), ayah 58)

The Messenger (PBUH), his Successors and the commanders of their armies stand out as the most remarkable manifestations of mercy and kindness:

'Commit no treachery, do not exceed the bounds, do not mutilate, do not kill women, children, and the aged, do not cut down fruit-bearing trees, and do not finish off the wounded. You will come across people who lead lives of devotion in hermitages: leave them and that to which they devote themselves, in peace.'

This was the military power of Islam, the guardians of justice, law and order. As for the present military might of Europe, everyone knows that it is an army of injustice and greed. Which of the two sides is more upright and magnanimous?

3.4. Islam and Public Health

Nations which are up and coming need to excel In military force, and the buttress of such a force is physical health and strength. The Qur'an points to this aspect in the story of a struggling nation which was ready to fight for the sake of its freedom, independence and formation. For Allah chose for it a leader, morally and ideologically sound, his physical strength in particular would allow him to bear the burden of fighting. This is what the Noble Qur'an relates concerning the Children of Israel and the confirmation of their leader, Saul (Taalut)

'Indeed Allah has chosen him above you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2),a ayah 247)

The messenger (PBUH) has commented on this concept in many narrations, and has urged the believers to preserve their bodily strength, just as he urged them regarding their spiritual strength.: There is a Hadeeth (Sahih) which cites:

'The strong believer is better than the weak believer.'

And also:

'Truly your body has a right over you.'

The messenger of Allah (PBUH) has clarified the principles of public health to the Ummah, especially concerning preventative medicine, the more excellent of the two aspects of medicine. He (PBUH) said:

'We are a people who do not eat unless we are hungry, and when we eat, we do not satisfy our hunger.'

And when The Prophet (PBUH) used to look for drinking water, he (PBUH) used to look for sweet water. And he forbade urinating and defecating in stagnant water, and declared a quarantine against plague ridden countries, so that the inhabitants should not leave such a country nor any outsider enter it. Finally, he (PBUH) paid much attention to physical sports, i.e., archery, swimming, horsemanship, and running, urging his Ummah to partake and show interest in them. There is even a narration which states:

'He who once knew archery and then forgot it, is not of my Ummah.'

And he (PBUH) stringently forbade celibacy, monasticism, and the punishing and weakening of the body in order to draw near to Allah (SWT). In all these matters he guided the Ummah in the direction of moderation. All of this testifies to Islam's deep concern for the health of the Ummah at large, to the strenuous efforts it made in order to safeguard it, and its acceptance of anything that is good for its general welfare and happiness.

3.5. Islam and Science

Just as nations need power, so do they need the science with which to support this power and direct it in the best possible manner, providing them with all that they require in the way of inventions and discoveries. Islam does not reject science; indeed, it makes it as obligatory as the acquisition of power, and gives it its support. It suffices to say that the very first verse of the Book of Allah to be revealed says:

'Recite, in the Name of thy Lord who created; created man from a clot of blood. Recite, for thy Lord is the Most

Gracious, who taught men with the pen; taught man what he did not know.' (Surah-al-'Alaq (96), ayah 1)

The Apostle of Allah (PBUH) stipulated as part of the ransom for the polytheists captured at Badr, one prisoner should teach ten Muslim children reading and writing, in the endeavor to wipe out illiteracy from the Ummah. Allah has not placed the learned and the ignorant equal. He (SWT) says:

'Are those who know and those who do not know equal? Only those who possess understanding are mindful.' (Surah-az-Zumar (39), ayah 11)

Islam has given the same weight to the ink of scholars as to the blood of martyrs. The Qur'an links science and power together in two noble verses:

'For why should not a few from every group of them march out as a party, so that they may gain knowledge of religion and warn their people when they return to them? Perhaps they will beware. O ye who believe fight those unbelievers who are close to you, and let them encounter harshness in you, and know ye that Allah is with the god-fearing.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 122-123)

The Qur'an does not distinguish between the natural and religious sciences, but advocates both. It sums up the natural sciences in one verse, by encouraging man to study them. To understand and be familiar with the universe is a way of revering Him and a path towards knowing Him. This is what the Almighty says:

'Hast thou not seen Allah send down water from the sky?' (Surah-Faatir (35), ayah 27)

Here Allah refers to astronomy and the cosmos, and the connection between heaven and earth. Then the Almighty says:

'And We produce their with fruits of varying colors.' (Surah-Faatir (35), ayah 27)

Here Allah refers to the amazing science of botany.

'And among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) black.' Surah-Faatir (35), ayah 27)

Here there is a reference to the science of geology, and the different modes of strata that constitute the earth.

'And of men and creatures that crawl and cattle, in like manner of various colors.' (Surah-Faatir (35), ayah 28)

Here there is reference to the science of biology and the classification system. Do you think that these verses have left out any of the natural sciences? To all of this the Almighty adds:

'The learned among His worshippers alone fear Allah.' (Surah-Faatir (35), ayah 28)

Don't you see that with such a wonderful construction of verses, Allah commands and encourages mankind to study the universe, placing those who have deep insight into the mysteries of the universe as those who revere and know Him.

3.6. Islam and Morality

The upcoming nation, above all else, needs to set a dignified and established moral code, together with a magnanimous spirit fired by lofty aspirations. For it will have to meet the demands of the new age which cannot be fulfilled unless it possesses sincere and strong morals founded on deep faith, unwavering determination, great self sacrifice, and considerable tolerance. Islam alone can create such a perfect soul, for it has made the purification of the soul a foundation of success. The Almighty says:

'He who has purified it will succeed: he who has corrupted it will fail.' (Surah-ash-Shams (91), ayahs 9-10)

He has made the reform of society incumbent upon the reform of the self and morality. He (SWT) says:

'Surely Allah will not change the circumstances of a people until they change what is in themselves.' (Surah-ar-Ra'd (13), ayah 11)

You will find verses that delve into the individual aspects of noble manners, and you will see that they represent an unassailable force, demanding one to purify and strengthen his soul, as the Almighty, says:

'Of the believers are men who were sincere in their covenant with Allah, and of them are those who fulfilled their vow, and of them are those who are waiting, not having changed at all, for Allah to reward the sincere for their sincerity.' (Surah-al-Ahzaab (33), ayahs 23-24)

Concerning generosity, self sacrifice, patience, tolerance, and the overcoming of hardships, Allah (SWT) says:

'And that is because they suffer neither thirst not hardship nor hunger in Allah's way, nor do they take a step which angers the unbelievers, nor do they gain anything from the enemy, but that a good deed is recorded on their behalf. Truly Allah does waste not the reward of the doers of Good, nor do they spend little or much, nor do they cross a valley, but it is recorded for them, so that Allah may reward them for the best of what they were doing.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayahs 120-121)

There is no agent like Islam, that can awaken the conscience, arouse feelings, and station a guard over the self. It is the only one that can regulate the deepest and most hidden secrets.

3.7. Islam and Economics

The rising nation also needs to regulate its economic affairs. This has been the most important question of this recent age. Islam is not negligent of this aspect, but rather has laid down all the possible guidelines. You may hear Allah (SWT) speaking of safeguarding property, explaining its value and the necessity to give it importance:

'Do not give the foolish your property of which Allah has appointed you the manager.' (Surah-an-Nisaa' (4), ayah 5)

And He says, concerning the balancing out of expenditures and income:

'And let not your hand be tied to thy neck, nor open it to its fullest extent.' (Surah-al-Israa' (17), ayah 29)

And the Apostle of Allah (PBUH) says:

'He who economizes will not be in need.'

What is true for the individual is just as true for the nation, as the Prophet (PBUH) says:

'How excellent is righteous wealth for a righteous man!'

Any good economic system is welcomed by Islam, and it urges the nation to promote it and puts no obstacles in its path. Islamic jurisprudence is filled with rules for financial transactions, and it has given them in such minute detail as to obviate further elaboration.

Finally, if the nation possesses all these reinforcements: hope, patriotism, science, power, health, and a sound economy, it will, without a doubt, be the strongest of all nations, and the future will belong to it. Especially, if to all this one adds that it has been purified of selfishness, aggressiveness, egotism, and arrogance, and has come to desire the welfare of the whole world. Indeed, Islam has guaranteed this, so there is no excuse for a nation that wants to rise to refuse this and divert from its path .

3.8. The Public Institutions of Islam

This is one of the beautiful aspects of the Islamic system, typically found in resurgent nations, bearing in mind that we are in an era of resurgence. As for reviewing all the beautiful aspects of this Islamic resurgence, it would require voluminous, vast and far-flung investigations. It is enough to say a few concise words on the aspects of this beauty: the Islamic system with respect to the individual, the nation, the family, the relationship between the government and its people and its relationship with other nations Has managed to bring together that which is all encompassing and general with that which is very precise and elaborate and has chosen the common good as well as giving it clarity. The Islamic system is the most perfect and most beneficial system known to mankind. This is supported by history and painstaking research in every aspect of national life.

This judgement, which was once limited to particular persons, has now become general, and is attested to by every fair minded individual. Whenever investigators delve into their researches, they uncover aspects of the perfection of this eternal system not previously discerned by their predecessors. Allah said in truth:

'We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in their souls until it is apparent to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that thy Lord is a witness over all things?' (Surah-as-Sajdah (41), ayah 53)

4. ISLAM PROTECTS MINORITIES AND SAFEGUARDS THE RIGHTS OF FOREIGNERS

Your Excellency,

People think that adhering to Islam and making it the basis for regulating ones life, as well as the unity of the different races of a nation, one of the strongest pillars of modernist revival, are incompatible with the existence of non Muslim minorities within the Islamic nation. However exactly the opposite is true. Islam, which was originated by the All Wise and All Knowing, The One who knows the past, present, and future of a nation, had taken all the measures to overcome this problem before it arose. The wise and sanctified rules did not appear without containing clear and unambiguous injunctions concerning the protection of minorities. Does mankind require anything more self evident than the following text:

'Allah does not forbid you to deal with those who have not fought against you in religion, and have not driven you from your homes, with benevolence, or to show them justice. surely Allah loves those who are just.' (Surah-al-Mumtahinah (60), ayah 8)

This text does not merely include protection, but it also counsels benevolence and sincerity towards them, for Islam sanctified the unity of mankind as a whole. The Almighty says:

'O mankind. We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another.' (Surah-al-Hujuraat (49), ayah 13)

Likewise, it sanctified universal religious unity, putting an end to fanaticism, and ordaining its people to have faith in all the revealed religions (in their original untammpered form) As the Almighty says:

'Say: "We believe in Allah and what He revealed to us and what He revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and what the prophets received from their Lord. We do not distinguish between any of them, and we have surrendered to Him." And if they believe the like of what you believe, they are rightly guided. But if they turn away, then they are in dissension, and Allah will suffice thee against them. He is the Hearer, the Knower! (Our religion is) the baptism of Allah and who is better than Allah in baptism?' (Surah-al-Baqarah (2), ayahs 136-138)

Then it sanctified religious unity of a special kind, without any arrogance or animosity. The Blessed and Almighty said:

'The believers are none other than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brothers and fear Allah; perhaps you will find mercy.' (Surah-al-Hujuraat (49), ayah 10)

This Islam, which was founded according to such a pattern of moderation and extreme justice, could not possibly be the cause for its followers to disrupt a long lasting

unity. On the contrary, it has endowed this unity as sacred, whereas formerly it used to draw its strength solely from the civil authority.

Islam has very precisely defined those whom we ought to oppose and boycott, and with whom we should cut off all relations. Following the verse cited earlier (Surah-al-Mumtahinah (60), ayah 8), the Almighty says:

'It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out. Whosoever befriends them they are wrongdoers.' (Surah-al-Mumtahinah (60), ayah 9)

No fair minded person in the world would compel any nation to remain at ease with an internal enemy of this type, or with great discord among its people, or any impairment to its internal or general organization.

This is Islam's position with respect to the non-Muslim minorities - clear, unambiguous, and free from injustice. Its position with respect to foreigners is one of peace and sympathy, so long as they behave with rectitude and sincerity. But if their consciences grow corrupt and their crimes increase, the Qur'an has already defined our stance regarding them:

'O you who believe! Do not take for confidants those who are not of you; they will not fail to hinder you; they are pleased by what troubles you. Hatred has been revealed out of their mouths; what their hearts conceal is yet greater. We have made the signs clear to you, if you would but understand. Behold, you love them, but they do not love you!' (Surah-aal-Imraan (3), ayah 118-119)

And with this, Islam has dealt with all of these aspects in the most precise, benevolent, and sincere manner.

5. ISLAM DOES NOT DISRUPT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN US AND THE WEST

People may imagine that the our Islamic way of life in this modern age, disconnects us from the Western nations, and this will only serve to disturb our political relations with them just when these were on the point of being settled. This too is a notion rooted in pure fantasy. For those nations which are suspicious of us will not be content with us whether we follow Islam or not. If they are truly our friends, and mutual trust exists between us, their own spokesmen and politicians have already declared that every nation is free to adopt whatever path it wishes within its own borders, provided it does not infringe on the rights of others. It is up to all the leaders of these nations to understand that the status of international Islam is the most sacred status known to history, and that it has laid down the most firm and solid principles to guard and preserve this status.

It is Islam which speaks about safeguarding treaties and fulfilling its obligation:

'And fulfil (every) covenant. Verily! the covenant will be questioned about.' (Surah-al-Israa' (17), ayah 34)

'Except for those of the polytheists with whom you have a treaty, and who have not subsequently failed you in anything, and have not helped anyone against you. fulfil your convenant with them up to its stated term. Truly Allah loves the god-fearing.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 4)

And He said:

'So long as they behave with rectitude toward you, behave with rectitude toward them.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 7)

And He said, regarding the generous reception of refugees and the treatment of those who seek protection:

'And if any one of the polytheists seeks refuge with thee, give him refuge so that he may hear Allah's Discourses, then take him to a place of security.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 6)

If this is the case for polytheists, what do you think will be the case for the People of the Book?

The Islam which prescribes these principles and takes its adherents along this path must surely be regarded by Westerners as guaranteeing still another type of security, namely for themselves. We maintain that it would be to Europe's benefit if these sound concepts governed its own internal relations this would be better and more enduring for them!

6. THE FUNDAMENTAL SOURCES OF RENAISSANCE IN THE EAST ARE NOT THOSE OF THE WEST

Your Excellency,

Among the causes which have impelled some of the Eastern Nations to deviate from Islam, and to choose to imitate the West, was the study of the Western Renaissance made by their leaders, and their conviction that it was only accomplished by overthrowing religion, destroying churches, freeing themselves from papal authority, controlling the clergy and prelates, putting an end to all manifestations of religious authority in the nation, and a definite separation of religion from the general policy of the state. If this is true in the case of the Western nations, it can never be the case for the Islamic nations, since the nature of Islamic teaching is quite unlike that of any other religion. The jurisdiction of the religious authorities in Islam is defined and limited. They are powerless to alter its statutes or to subvert its institutions, such that the fundamental principles of Islam, across the centuries, have kept pace with time, and have advocated progress, supported learning, and defended scholars.

You cannot say that what happened in the West will also happen to Islam. Investigations on this subject are extensive, one on which many books have been written:

Our purpose in this paper is to survey the subject briefly in order to bear it in mind and dispel any doubts. We are sure that every fair minded person will agree with us on this principle; therefore such sentiments should never be allowed to lead us in our modern renaissance, which must first of all be based on the strong pillars of a virtuous moral code, a flourishing science, and far reaching power, which is what Islam enjoins.

7. THE MEN OF RELIGION AND RELIGION ARE NOT ONE AND THE SAME

One of the excuses adopted by some of those who have followed the path taken by the West, was that they had become aware of the path taken by the Muslim religious authorities, in view of their hostile attitude towards nationalist revival, their activities against the nationalists and their alliance with the occupiers, their choice of selfish interests and worldly ambitions over the welfare of the country and the nation. If true, this was a flaw within the religious establishment itself, not in the religion as such. Does the religion command such things? Or are they dictated by the lives of the most virtuous and illustrious 'Ulamaa' (scholars) of the Islamic Ummah, who used to burst in upon kings and princes, past their gates and walls, censuring them, forbidding them, rejecting their gifts, declaring what the truth was before them, and bringing them the demands of the nation? Nay, they even took up arms in the face of tyranny and injustice! History has not yet forgotten the ranks of jurists of Ibn-al-Ash'ath in the eastern region of the Islamic Empire; nor the rebellion of the Qadi Yahya ibn Yahya al-Laythi al-Maliki in its Western region.

Such are the teachings of this religion, and such is the past history of the jurists of Islam. Is there any trace in this of what they assert ? Or is it just that this religion should tolerate the irresponsible actions of those who have deviated from it?

Nevertheless, even if these allegations hold true for some people, it is not the case for the people as a whole. And if it can be substantiated for a particular circumstance, it is not the case for all circumstances. This is the history of the modern renaissance in the East, laden with the position of the Muslim religious authorities in every single nation. The position taken by Al-Azhar in Egypt; and by the [Arab] Higher Committee in South Syria, or Palestine, and North Syria, or Lebanon; and by Mawlana Abul-Kalam [Azad] and his brothers among the most illustrious of the Indian 'Ulamaa' (scholars), and by the Muslim leaders in Indonesia, is not forgotten nor is it alien. Therefore, these assertions must not be used as a pretext for diverting any nation from its religion simply in the name of nationalism. Is it not more productive for a nation to reform its religious authorities and to reconcile with them, rather than adopt an oppressive attitude towards them? Even if these expressions which have crept into our language by way of imitation, like 'religious authorities', are not in accord with our own usage, since this usage is peculiar to the West, in the sense of 'clergy'. According to the Islamic usage, it includes every Muslim, for all Muslims from the least to the most outstanding of them, are 'religious authorities'.

8. A BOLD BUT SUCCESSFUL STEP

Your Excellency,

After all the foregoing, it would be inexcusable for us to turn aside from the path of truth, that of Islam, and to follow the path of carnal desires and vanities - that of Europe. Along the path of Europe are to be found enticement and glamour, pleasures and luxuries, laxity and license, and comforts that captivate the soul, for all of these things are loved by the soul, as the Almighty says:

'Made beautiful for mankind is the love of material desires: women, and children, and heaped up mounds of gold and silver, and branded horses, and cattle, and tilled land. That is the comfort of this world.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayah 14)

But the path of Islam is one of glory and fortitude, truth, strength, blessing, integrity, stability, virtue, and nobility. Take the nation along this path, may Allah grant you success!

'Say: "Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who are God-fearing in the presence of their Lord, there are Gardens beneath which rivers flow, they being in them forever, and purified spouses, and the approbation of Allah . Allah is aware of His worshippers.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayah 15)

Luxuries only annihilate nations, all that destabilized Europe was pleasure and greed:

'And when We wish to destroy a city, We command its men of wealth, and they commit transgression in it, and the sentence against it is justified, and We destroy it utterly.' (Surah-aal-Imran (3), ayah 16)

Allah (SWT) sent His Apostle as a mercy to the world, and with him He sent His Book as a light and a guidance until the Day of Judgement. The leadership of the Apostle (PBUH) survives in the form of his Sunnah, and the authenticity of the Qur'an is strengthened by the validity of its arguments. Humanity is marching inevitably towards them both, with the might and the humility, from near and from far, so that Allah's Word is fulfilled;

'That He may make it triumphant over every religion.' (Surah-at-Tawbah (9), ayah 33)

Be the first to come forward in the name of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), with the healing provided by the Qur'an, to save the tormented, sick world! It is a bold step, but one crowned with success, Allah willing (SWT), for Allah is victorious in His affairs:

'Then the believers will rejoice in Allah's succor. He gives success to whom He wills, for He is the Mighty, the Merciful.' (Surah-ar-Rum (30), ayah 45)

9. SOME STEPS TOWARD PRACTICAL REFORM

Your Excellency,

Having given a clear presentation of the spiritual sentiments that should prevail within the nation in its modern renaissance, we would like to point out, by way of conclusion, some of the practical manifestations and results which these sentiments should dictate. We are going to mention here only the broadest topics, since we are well aware that each one of these questions requires extensive, broad and detailed study, taxing the energies and capacities of even specialists. We know too that we have not yet fully analyzed all the requirements and demands of the nation, nor all the manifestations of the renaissance. We do not believe that to fulfil these demands will be a simple matter which can be accomplished overnight, and we know there are manifold obstacles before us which will require vast patience, great wisdom, and a long running determination. We know all this and can take it in our stride. Besides this, we know that where there is genuine resolve, the way will be made plain, and that if a strong willed nation chooses the path of virtue, it shall, by the will of Allah Almighty, attain what it desires. Stride forward, and God will be with you !

Following, are the principal goals of reform founded on the spirit of genuine Islam:

9.1. Political, judicial and administrative goals

(1) An end to party rivalry, and directing the political forces of the nation into a unified front.

(2) Amending the law, such that it conforms to all branches of Islamic legislation.

(3) Reinforcing the armed forces, and increasing the number of youth groups; igniting in them the spirit of Islamic jihad.

(4) Strengthening the ties between all the Islamic countries, especially the Arab countries, to pave the way for a practical and serious consideration concerning the departed Caliphate.

(5) Spreading the Islamic spirit throughout all departments of the government, so that all its employees will feel responsible for adhering to Islamic teachings.

(6) Keeping a close eye on the personal conduct of all its employees, there should not be any dichotomy between ones private and professional life.

(7) Setting the hours of work in summer and winter ahead, so that it will be easy to fulfil religious duties, and bring an end to late hours.

(8) An end to bribery and nepotism, promotion should only be given to those who have the capability and have a legitimate claim.

(9) Weighing all governmental acts in view of Islamic rules and teachings, National holidays, receptions, official conferences, prisons and hospitals should all be compatible with the Islamic teachings; hours of work should be arranged such that they do not conflict with the Salah times.

(10) The employment of graduates of Al-Azhar in military and administrative positions, and their training.

9.2. Social and educational goals

(1) Conditioning the people to respect public morality, and issuing law bound directives on this matter; the imposition of sever penalties for moral offences.

(2) To deal with the 'woman issue' - In a way which will both elevate her position and provide her protection, in accordance with the Islamic teachings. So that this issue (socially the most important) is not left at the mercy of the biased pens and unorthodox notions of those who are either deficient or excessive.(in their opinions)

(3) An end to prostitution, both clandestine and overt: and to recognize fornication as a crime, whatever the circumstances, a detestable crime whose perpetrator must be flogged.

(4) An end to gambling in all its forms: games, lotteries, racing, and casinos.

(5) A campaign against drinking, similar to the one against drugs: its prohibition, and the salvation of the nation from its effects.

(6) A campaign against ostentation in dress and loose behavior; the instruction of women in what is proper, with particular strictness as regards female teachers, pupils, physicians, and students, and all those in similar categories.

(7) A review of the curricula offered to girls and the necessity of making them distinct from the boys' curricula in many of the stages of education.

(8) The prohibition of Free Mixing between male and female students; and to consider privacy between a non-Mahram (marriageable) male and female a punishable crime.

(9) The encouragement of marriage and procreation, by all possible means; promulgation of legislation to protect and give moral support to the family, and solve the problems of marriage.

(10) The closure of morally undesirable ballrooms and dance halls, and the prohibition of dancing and other such pastimes.

(11) The inspection of theatres and cinemas, and a rigorous selection of play scripts and film rolls.

(12) The censorship of songs, and a rigorous selection and inspection of them.

(13) The careful selection of lectures, songs, and subjects to be broadcast to the nation; the use of radio broadcasting for the education of the nation in a virtuous and moral way.

(14) The confiscation of provocative stories and books that implant the seeds of skepticism in an insidious manner, and newspapers which strive to disseminate immorality and capitalize indecently on lustful desires.

(15) The supervision of summer vacation areas which will bring an end to the wholesale confusion and promiscuity which nullify the soul purpose of going on holiday.

(16) Restricting the business hours of cafes; supervising the activities of their owners; instructing them as to what is in the best interest of the public; and not allowing them to stay open for such long hours.

(17) The utilization of these cafes for teaching illiterates reading and writing; assisting towards this end, the rising generation of elementary school teachers and students.

(18) To resist harmful customs, whether economic, moral, or anything else; turning the tide of the masses away from such practices, and orienting them to that which is beneficial, or educating them in a way which conforms with their best interests. This involves such customs as weddings, funerals, birthdays, the zar (a meeting of supernatural-believers), civil and religious holidays, etc. Let the government set a good example in this respect.

(19) Due consideration for the claims of the moral censorship, and punishment of all who are proved to have infringed any Islamic doctrine or attacked it, such as breaking the fast of Ramadan, willful neglect of prayers, Insulting the faith, and similar such matters.

(20) Merging the elementary village schools with the mosque, and a thoroughgoing reform of both, as regards employees, cleanliness, and overall custodial care, so that the young may be trained in prayer and the older generation in learning.

(21) To appoint religious education as a basic subject in all schools as well as in the universities, each according to its type.

(22) To encourage the memorization of the Qur'an in all the free elementary schools: making this memorization mandatory for obtaining diplomas in the areas of religion and language; The memorization of at least a part of the Qur'an should be a must in all schools.

(23) The establishment of a firm educational policy which will enhance and raise the level of education, which will unify its goals and purposes; bringing the different cultures represented in the nation closer together, and making the first stage of its process dedicated to instilling a virtuous, patriotic spirit and an unwavering moral code.

(24) To pay attention to the Arabic language at every stage of education; and the use of Arabic alone, as opposed to any foreign language, in the primary stages.

(25) Emphasis on the Islamic, national and cultural history, as well as that of the Islamic civilization.

(26) A consideration into the means of gradually forming a national uniform

(27) An end to the foreign spirit in our homes with regard to language, manners, dress, governesses, nurses, etc; All this should be corrected especially in upper class homes.

(28) To give journalism a proper direction, and to encourage authors and writers to undertake Islamic subjects

(29) Attention to be given to matters of public health by spreading health information through various means; more so via hospitals, doctors, and mobile clinics and facilitating the means of obtaining medical treatment.

(30) Attention to be given to problems of villages, regarding their organization, their cleanliness, the purification of their water supply, and the means to provide them with culture, recreation, and training.

9.3. The Economical Goals

(1) The organization of Zakah in terms of income and expenditure, according to the teachings of the Sacred Law; using it to carry out necessary benevolent projects, such as homes for the aged, the poor, and orphans, and strengthening the armed forces.

(2) The prohibition of usury, and the organization of banks with this end in view. The government should be an example in this domain by relinquishing all interest due on its own particular undertakings, for instance in the loan granting banks, industrial loans, etc.

(3) To encourage (the development and number of) economic projects; providing jobs for the unemployed; the transfer of those in the hands of foreigners to the purely national sector.

(4) To protect the masses from the oppression of multinational companies, keeping these within strict limits, and obtaining every possible benefit for the masses

(5) Improving the situation of junior civil servants by raising their salaries, granting them steady increases and compensations, and by lowering the salaries of senior civil servants.

(6) To reduce the number of government posts, retaining only the indispensable ones; and an equitable and scrupulous distribution of the work among civil servants.

(7) To encourage agricultural and industrial counseling; giving importance to the production level of the peasant and industrial worker.

(8) To be concerned about the technical and social problems of the worker; raising his standard of living in numerous respects.

(9) The exploitation of natural resources, such as uncultivated land, neglected mines, etc.

(10) Priority over luxury items to be given to necessary projects in terms of organization and execution

This is the message of the Muslim Brotherhood. We submit it, and place ourselves, our talents, and all we possess in the hands of any committee or government desirous of taking a step forward, hand in hand with an Islamic nation, toward progress and advancement We will answer the call, and we are prepared to sacrifice ourselves. We hope that by so doing we will have fulfilled our trust and said our piece, for religion means sincerity toward Allah, His Apostle, His Book, the Imams of the Muslims, and their community at large. Allah is our sufficiency; He is enough; and peace to His chosen worshippers!